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ABSTRACT

This document presents a discussion aimed at relating organizational aims and operational objectives to the total educational picture in Michigan. The document views the educational needs of children and youth as a continuum beginning at about age 3 and ending (for elementary and secondary purposes) at about age 18. The premise of the continuum is stated as follows: public education's primary task is meeting the needs of all children and youth as they prepare for adulthood. The corollary of the premise is as follows: the needs of all children and youth include continued and monitored educational progress through the years of required formal schooling, as well as readiness and adequacy for (a) a job, (b) satisfactory interpersonal relationships, (c) college, (d) other continuing education, and (e) citizenship. Two models are presented. The first is "Preparing Children for Adolescence"; the second, derived from the first, is "Preparing Youth for Adulthood." Each model has six steps: goals, performance objective areas, student-school needs assessment, new delivery system plans, inservice professional development program, and, recommendations to local district and state boards of education. (JA)

a position statement on

Educational Accountability

for improved instructional services
in the elementary and secondary
schools of Michigan

2

Michigan Department of Education

Foreword

The purpose of this position statement is to place in proper perspective the role of the State Board of Education in implementing an accountability model for improving the delivery of educational services to the children and youth of the state of Michigan.

The model highlights the need for common goals of education, development of performance objectives rather than textbook completion, assessing needs, analyzing the ways in which teachers teach, and providing outside educational audits to determine if changes have indeed taken place, in addition to providing guaranteed in-service professional development.

This model is a process, not a curriculum imposition. Along with being continuous and circular, the model is envisioned as enhancing the role of the teacher in the educational process of preparing our children and youth for adulthood.

In a sense, use of the educational accountability model is analagous to "program budgeting" in the business world. It involves planning, acting and evaluating; it is a tool to be employed, or a road map to help lead the educator or citizen where he wants to go.

As a process, the accountability model can help Michigan education along as it progresses in preparing children, youth and adults for life in the 21st century.

John W. Porter
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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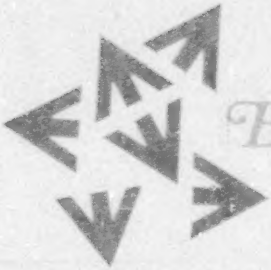


Background

From time to time it is appropriate for the State Board of Education to step back a pace or two and take stock of the organizational aims and operational objectives of the total educational enterprise in Michigan. Included here are graphic presentations designed to afford such an opportunity. It might be said that such evaluation is designed to prevent us all from becoming blind to the forest because our attention is concentrated on the trees.

Over the course of more than 30 months, the Department of Education has devoted a great deal of collective attention to developing an overall accountability model in public education.

The many specific attempts to achieve greater accountability may be condensed into six general categories, or thrusts. These are:

1. Identification, discussion and dissemination of common goals for Michigan Education.

2. Approaches to educational challenges based on performance objectives consistent with the goals.

3. Assessment of educational needs not being met, and which must be met to achieve performance objectives and goals.

4. Analysis of the existing (or planned) educational delivery systems in light of what assessment tells us.

5. Evaluation and testing within the new or existing delivery system to make sure it serves the assessed needs.

6. Recommendations for improvement based upon the above.

Basically, this accountability model may be applied to any aspect of the educational enterprise in Michigan and, if it is properly understood, it will tell us a great deal about educational directions for the future.

To some, consideration of an accountability model or new elements in education has appeared to represent a threat or a challenge to historically developed educational approaches, and a judgement as to the efficacy of such approaches at this point in time. No threat is intended, but each of us must find challenge in consideration of the new educational elements, and there must be general recognition that whatever its strengths and weaknesses, the historically developed system of educational services does not today serve effectively all of the children and youth entrusted to our care.

There is a clear message in the legions of statistics and studies compiled over the last few years: Too many youngsters quit school at an early age, and too many youngsters who "graduate from high school" are ill-prepared, or disinclined, or both, to pursue either further education or productive labor—in short, enter into adulthood—in the free enterprise milieu of our nation today.

Building Accountability into the Education System

I	Common Goals	IV	Delivery Systems Analysis
II	Performance Objectives	V	Evaluation & Testing
III	Needs Assessment	VI	Recommendations for Improvement

The staff of the Michigan Department of Education has taken a good deal of time looking at new elements in the delivery of educational services. Such elements include:

(1) Compensatory education
(2) Experimental programs and demonstration schools
(3) Performance contracting
(4) Year around schooling
(5) School meals improvement
(6) Alternative occupational scheduling
(7) Coordinated career education
(8) Student financial assistance
(9) Expanded utilization of facilities
(10) Neighborhood education centers
(11) Improved professional development
(12) Early childhood education

To some, the approach to these elements and others may have appeared to be compartmentalized. It is not. Instead, the consideration of these elements has been and continues to be integrated in what may be termed a comprehensive "state approach to improved elementary and secondary services to children and youth."

In order to achieve improvement in the approach to provision of elementary and secondary services, it is essential to start with an understanding of the interrelatedness of new and traditional elements in education. Such elements include, of course, the ideas and approaches which have recently been our major concern, and they also include the mechanisms and traditions, the practices and procedures—even the physical facilities—historically involved with the provision of education to children in Michigan. It has been the task and the aim, in a nutshell, to "build accountability into the educational system."

Only in viewing the educational needs of children and youth as, in effect, a continuum beginning at about age three and ending (for elementary and secondary purposes) at about age 18 can there be assurance of finding the organizational and operational means of achieving desired ends. Such a continuum may be plotted horizontally or vertically; it may be discussed in terms of any sort of analogy—a football game, for example—but its message is clear and can be viewed graphically.

Michigan Department of Education
meeting the needs of all children and youth

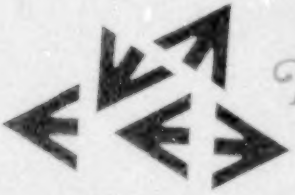
In constructing and using such a continuum, it is necessary to start with only one premise, and one corollary of that premise:

THE PREMISE: Public education's primary task is meeting the needs of all children and youth as they prepare for adulthood.

THE COROLLARY: The needs of all children and youth (or any child or youth) include continued and monitored educational progress through the years of required formal schooling (and a little beyond), and readiness and adequacy for (1) a job, (2) satisfactory interpersonal relationships, (3) college, (4) other continuing education, and (5) citizenship. (NOTE: None of the five "readiness outcomes" need be exclusive of the others, but since maturation rates and interests are widely divergent, it may be assumed for purposes of generalization that readiness and adequacy for any one is sufficient evidence of "successful" educational development.)

It may help, in considering the continuum, to begin by leapfrogging from the start of school to graduation. The question posed by such a leap in time is, "what is it that a child or youth should know and be able to do at graduation?" One simple response that few would challenge is "to assume one's role as an adult." This suggests adequate preparation for continuing education, a job, marriage, and citizenship.

If that is reasonable, efforts must be made to assist the child to achieve a number of intermediate steps on the way to this goal. These intermediate steps can be identified as follows: (1) completion of the pre-school years (roughly, ages 3-4-5 years old) with measurable readiness for entry into the primary school (grades 1, 2, 3) milieu; (2) measurable progress through the primary years (ages 6-7-8) which results in readiness for elementary school (grades 4, 5 and 6); (3) adequate assimilation of basic skills, knowledge and abilities in the elementary years (ages 9-10-11) in preparation for middle or junior high school (grades 7-8-9); (4) performance maturation and skills improvement in the adolescent years (ages 12-13-14) to prepare for the young adult years (ages 15-16-17 and grades 10-11-12).



Preparing Children and Youth

Having devised a strategy for improving elementary and secondary services to children and youth, and recognizing that there *will* be change in our educational delivery systems, the remaining step is application of theory to the "real world."

The model for building accountability into the educational system has six steps;

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Preparing Children for Adolescence

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE AREAS		**NEW DELIVERY SYSTEM PLANS**		
	COGNITIVE DOMAIN: **Communication Skills**; Mathematic Skills; Natural Science Skills; Social Science Skills; Fine Arts Skills		**Compensatory** Education; Experimental and Demonstration Schools; Year-Around Schooling; Pre-School Education		
GOALS FOR CHILDREN	PSYCHO-MOTOR DOMAIN: Health Skills; Physical Education Skills; Industrial Arts Skills	CHILD SCHOOL NEEDS ASSESSMENT	School Meals Improvement; **Performance Contracting**	IN-SERVICE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM; EVALUATION	RECOMMENDATIONS TO LOCAL DISTRICTS AND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
	AFFECTIVE DOMAIN: Creativity; Tolerance; **Morality**; **Honesty**; **Self-Discipline**; **Social Awareness**				

Ages 3 - 12

application of this model, in the context of the "growth continuum," also—naturally—has six steps and may be accomplished with reference to a single individual or to groups of like individuals. In this presentation, let us begin with an example showing application of the accountability model to the task of preparing children for adolescence.

STEP I: The State Board of Education has articulated certain goals for children. These are spelled out in general terms in the "Common Goals of Michigan Education." Each local district is asked to develop their own modification of these goals.

STEP II: There are, by common consensus and by definition, certain things it is assumed children ought to know at various stages in their development. This information must now be translated into performance measures. While much work remains to be done, the performance objectives fall naturally into skill areas and attitude-aspiration areas which are, psychologically speaking, in the cognitive domain, the psycho-motor domain or the affective domain.

STEP III: Having identified the goals for children, and having articulated the performance objectives for schools, it is necessary to assess the existing relationship between them. This analytical chore must utilize all the knowledge at hand: research, testing, resource distribution and personnel availability and a host of others. The objective is to give local school officials some notion of the variance between desirability of performance objectives and what the child or children can do (needs assessment).

STEP IV: Based on the needs assessment, plans must be made to change the delivery systems to reverse what has often been termed as the "push-out" or "leave behind" problem. Among the many things which may be used are performance contracting, compensatory education, promising practices from experimental and demonstration schools, year-around schooling, intensified pre-school education, improvement of nutrition through school meals, in-service training of teachers, and many others.

STEP V: If a change takes place in the delivery system, that change needs to be tested and evaluated. If valid, across the board in-service professional development programs should be fostered.

STEP VI: When a district or school has gone through these steps, they should feel obligated to share the results. Recommendations to the local district, and to the State Board of Education, complete what is essentially a circular pattern of service—goals are served and/or modified on the basis of continuing attention to the success or lack of success in the educational delivery system, and the process starts over again.

When addressing the question of "preparing youth for adulthood," it is found essentially the same circular pattern of continuous progress.

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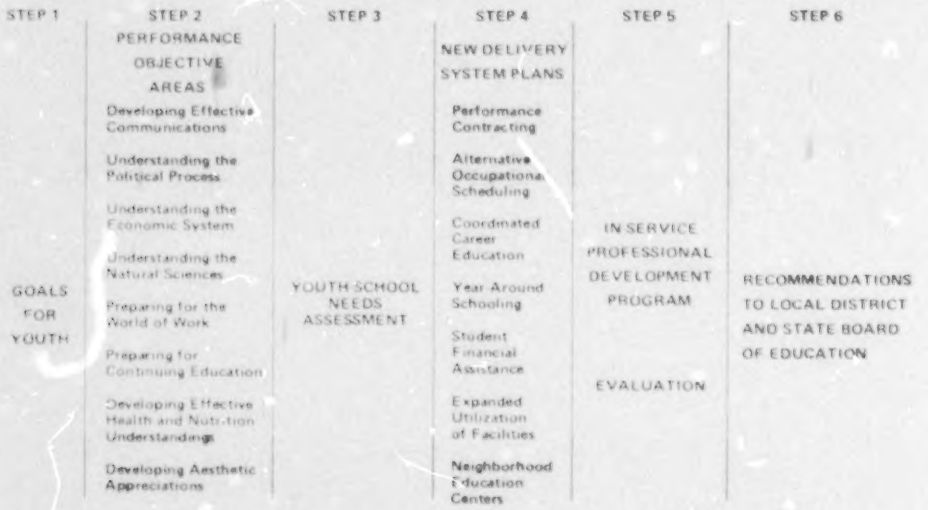
Preparing Youth for Adulthood



Ages 12 - 18

STEP I: Goals for youth are articulated, principally, among other places in the "Common Goals of Education." Local modifications are developed.

STEP II: Skill or knowledge areas in the preparation of youth include such things as developing effective communications, understanding the political and economic systems, acquaintance with the natural sciences, preparing for work or continuing education, development of health and nutrition understanding, and development of aesthetic appreciations. Specific performance measures must be developed.

STEP III: The youth-school needs assessment, like the child-school needs assessment, is an analytical chore and utilizes statewide local, professional, parental, psychological and a host of other "tools." The objective is to identify disparities between desired and actual outcomes.

STEP IV: New delivery system plans for youth include, besides the school oriented innovations such as performance contracting, etc., a heavy emphasis on new thrusts in career education, including alternative occupational scheduling, student financial assistance, coordination of career education approaches, better utilization of career education facilities, and neighborhood education facilities.

STEP V: In-service professional development and evaluation of effort in preparing youth for adulthood may require a greater emphasis on willingness to accept change than this step in the preparation of children for adolescence, since performance area objectives and new delivery system plans for youth by their nature are likely to involve far more radical departures from the "traditional" approaches.

STEP VI: Recommendations for change which may come to (or originate with) local districts and the State Board of Education are tested against goals for youth, and the cycle continues.

Summary

This discussion has aimed at relating organizational aims and operational objectives to the total educational picture in Michigan. The organizational aims and operational objectives which have been outlined constitute the approach of the Department of Education as it seeks to perform its function as the executive arm of the State Board of Education; as a leader for local and intermediate school districts; as a resource for public officials and other branches of government, and as a service agency for the citizens of Michigan. It is anticipated that a later paper will deal with specific objectives of Department of Education units, and delineate to a greater degree the concerns of various units of the educational community in seeking to address the organizational aims and operational objectives here discussed. Likewise, a similar document is being prepared to focus on the educational services necessary to meet the needs of Michigan adults.